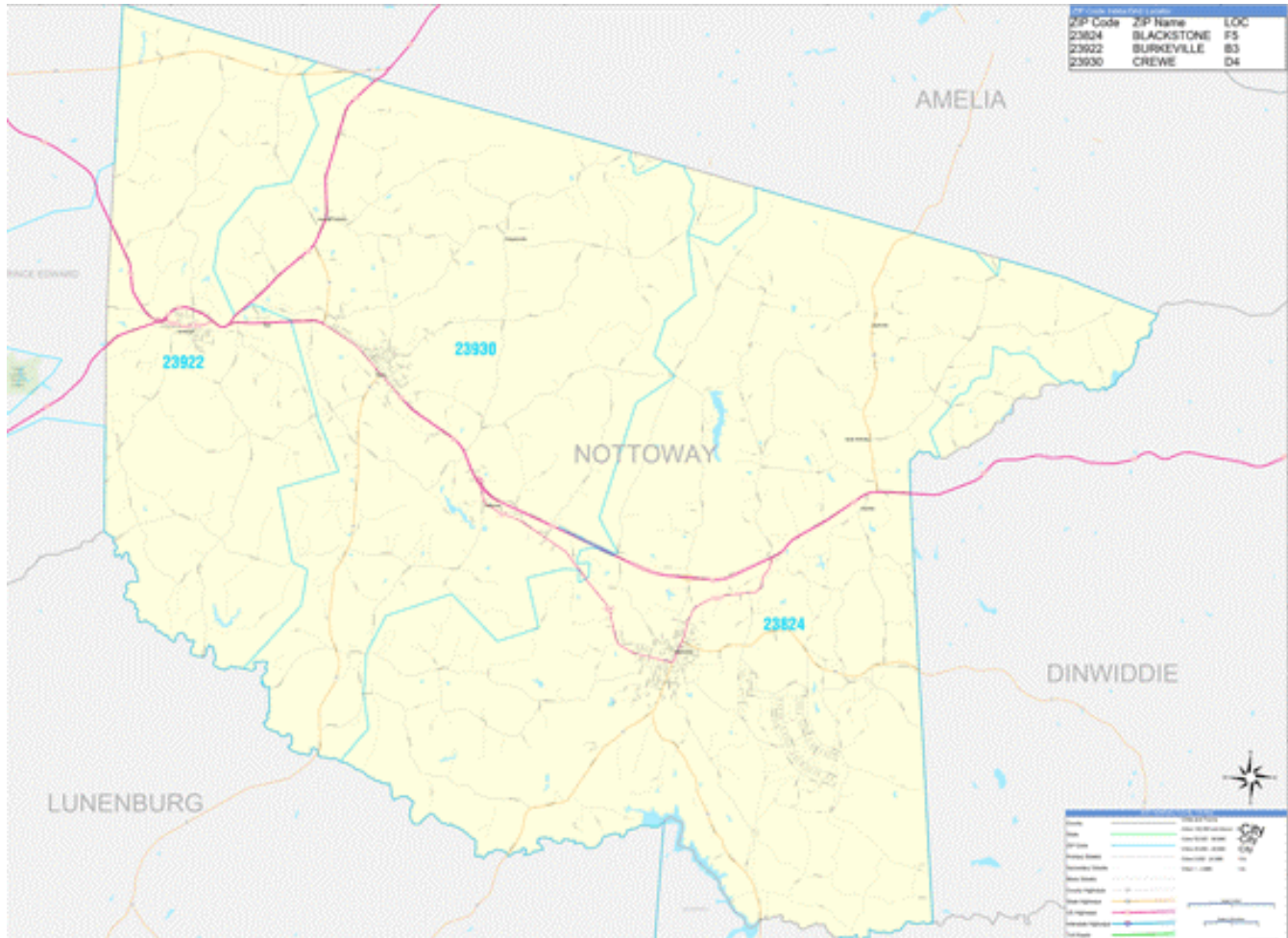




Nottoway Unit 2023 Situational Analysis Report

Staff- Terry Abston, UC/4H youth Agent; Abbi Messer- AFA; ELC- Jessica Faas, Sarah Allen, Ricky Rash, Greg Zody, Lydia Shepherd, Amanda Atkinson, Dr. Clarence Hawkes



Summary of community issues and Extension office responses

| Priority Issue | Planned Unit Response |
|--|---|
| Drug abuse | Educational Response from Cooperative extension and Nottoway County Schools |
| Lack of jobs and job skills | Job training workshops to address hiring issues. |
| Volunteer resources | There is a need for more programs which means more volunteers need to be vetted and trained to work with youth. |
| Self-sustainability | Partner with FFA and develop workshops focused on gardening and food preservation. |
| Financial management | Partner with churches and civic organizations to develop workshops focused on money management and utilize tax experts to help with lack of family resources. |
| Habitat and environmental education | Water clinics and soil clinics pond management workshops, forest harvest workshops are ideas to help spread the knowledge of the environmental resources. |
| Greater focus on Agriculture Education | 4H, FFA, Master Gardeners, food safety and biosolids usage. Establish programs to help farmers maintain work force to thrive in this economic market. |
| Single parent resources before and after school. | With partnership of DSS and the school system, establish a support group which can identify resources to help with the lack of child care for families. |

Introduction

Nottoway County's ELC has been evaluating the priorities of 2018 by assigning priorities to a subcommittee which reported back their findings to the overall Extension Leadership Council. Some of the priorities had been met; others were not addressed due to lack of resources and a change in personnel. The ELC continued to focus on identified issues and research on our changing demographics. Through teamwork and much discussion, we have found that programming emphasis may need to be redirected to match lack of resources in Nottoway County.

In 2023 demographic information was collected by a team of individuals and was posted for our use. We also used the county's demographic information offered by the county Economic Director. ELC members in the situational analysis committee reviewed the old situational analysis, looked over the new data on population and made plans on how to distribute the survey created by Virginia Tech. The committee agreed that some of the language needed to be changed and it was approved by IRB. After which the survey was hand delivered to people at various county events; town hall meetings, farm bureau meeting, local libraries, unit Facebook page, displayed in the local paper, and on the newspaper website, plus it was posted on various group pages on Facebook.

Once the survey was closed in late November the ELC got together to analyze the results. Looking closely at the survey results, they determined the issues of Nottoway County citizens. Once priorities were identified, the ELC ranked them and voted how they be listed in the situation analysis.

Unit Profile

Forest Products

Natural resources include 137,206 acres of commercial forest land, or 70% of the total land area. This forest land is 71% privately owned; of the 29% in public ownership, 14,199 acres are owned by the federal government as part of Fort Barfoot, located in the eastern end of the county.

Dominant softwood species in the area include shortleaf pine, loblolly pine, Virginia pine, and red cedar. The hardwoods include red oak, white oak, yellow poplar, hickory, black gum, maple, and beech.

Agriculture

Nottoway County has 408 farms that total 71,442 acres of land. That farmland is used to produce tobacco, wheat, corn, soybeans, and hay. Some of that land is also used to keep 16,000 head of cattle.

Nottoway County produces tobacco, both flue-cured and dark-fired, corn, soybeans, small grains, fruits, and a variety of forage crops. Beef cattle and poultry farms are numerous.

As land is being divided, hobby farms and "farmlets" are being created with their own needs.

Schools

Nottoway County has 2 Primary schools (grades Pre-K-4), 1 Intermediate school (grades 5-6), 1 Middle school (grades 7-8), and 1 High school (grades 9-12). The school's population for the 2021-2022 school year is 1,878 students. The district's minority enrollment is 60%.

The student body at the schools served by Nottoway County Public Schools is 40.4% White, 43.2% Black, 0.6% Asian or Asian/Pacific Islander, 9.5% Hispanic/Latino, 0.6% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0% Native Hawaiian or another Pacific Islander. In addition, 5.6% of students are two or more races, and 0% have not specified their race or ethnicity.

Also, 49% of students are female, and 51% of students are male. At Nottoway County Public Schools, all students are eligible to participate in the federal free and reduced-price meal program and 3.5% of students are English language learners.

Nottoway High School serves 563 students in grades 9-12.

The percentage of students achieving proficiency in math is 35-39% (which is lower than the Virginia state average of 54%) for the 2020-21 school year. The percentage of students achieving proficiency in reading/language arts is 70-74% (which is higher than the Virginia state average of 69%) for the 2020-21 school year.

The student to teacher ratio of 12:1 is lower than the Virginia state level of 14:1.

Minority enrollment is 57% of the student body (majority Black), which is higher than the Virginia state average of 54% (majority Black).

Nottoway High School's student population of 563 students has declined by 8% over five school years.

9.5% of the students in the Class of 2022 dropped out of school before graduating.

27.9% of the students in this school were chronically absent in the 2021 - 2022 school year. 67.6% are economically disadvantaged.

Accreditation

Blackstone Primary is accredited with Conditions, Crewe Primary is accredited, Nottoway intermediate is accredited, and Nottoway Middle and Nottoway High School are accredited with conditions.

Nottoway Public schools are not the only schools in Nottoway County, Kenston Forest is a private, Christian school serving 476 students. Kenston has a college Matriculation of 95% and the average class size is 16 students. This school has a faculty, student ratio of 1-10.

Heath Care

There is a lack of medical services in Nottoway County. Availability, access, and affordability were important factors for underserved persons, coupled with the high percentage of county residents below the poverty level.

The County Health Department provides services for maternal child health, immunizations, family planning, Medicaid screening, pre-school and special education clinics, x-ray clinics, and other related services. Crossroads Mental Health Services Board provides services to mentally ill and handicapped persons. Yet there is limited access to doctors, most of the community clinics are maxed out and have no room for new clientele. The most we can expect is a nurse practitioner for medical services in our area.

Mental health is an issue in the county. The most commonly written prescriptions are for mental conditions (e.g., depression, anxiety, etc.). The relationship between depression and diabetes among county children or adults is unknown (<https://stacker.com/virginia/nottoway-county-va/what-access-mental-health-care-looks-nottoway-county-virginia>).

There continues to be evidence of an association between incidence of Type 2 Diabetes in children and an increased incidence of obesity. Adequate nutrition is an issue in Nottoway partly due to decreasing food access. We have lost two grocery stores on the western end of the county

Poverty

SNAP Benefits Recipients in Nottoway County, VA was 2,559 people in January of 2020, according to the United States Federal Reserve. Historically, SNAP Benefits Recipients in Nottoway County, VA reached a record

high of 3,688 in January of 2013 and a record low of 1,458 in January of 1989. Trading Economics provides the current actual value, an historical data chart and related indicators for SNAP Benefits Recipients in Nottoway County, VA - last updated from the United States Federal Reserve on August of 2023.

Crime

Nottoway County has lower-than-average rates of both violent and property crime compared to the rest of the United States. The violent crime rate in Nottoway County is 17.5, which is lower than the US average of 22.7. Similarly, the property crime rate in Nottoway County is 45.7, which is higher than the national average of 35.4. These figures indicate that Nottoway, VA County is generally a safe place in which to live and work.

Food access

Nottoway is a county of haves and have nots. Part of the county, mainly Blackstone area, have retail fresh food access. The Western and Southern parts of the county don't have access to fresh produce and meats. Limited resource individuals depend on churches and neighbors to help get food supplies to those that need it. There are food access groups delivering food from feed more but resources are limited. Those that have no transportation are left out. There are little to no elderly resources, assistance is sparse at best.

Government

Nottoway Administration has changed in the past two years going from a long-standing administration with a conservative focus, to a more outspoken citizenry demanding change. In 2021 a new County Administrator was hired however; he resigned his position in 2023. There is currently an interim administrator.

Recreation

Nottoway has started a county rec-association, bringing the west and east together. There is much work to be done, volunteers are scarce and many of the teams have had to be limited due to the lack of coaches and volunteers to bring about youth competition.

Community and Resident Perspectives

New county residents are bringing diverse backgrounds and perspectives, thereby changing the county's demographics for the past 5 years. 68% did notice change. Noted were more people moving in from urban areas, Hispanics, and retirees; impacting the culture and resources of the county. The most pressing/developing problems or concerns facing the county today are water resource issues, declining state funding, lack of job skill training, more agriculture education, insufficient living wage job opportunities, a perceived increase in crime, and lack of county resources to support after-school youth programs. There is an increase in drug use within the county.

Lack of affordable housing and lack of safe housing for rental properties is also a main concern of the citizens. This inhibits growth in population and advancement of the towns. There continues to be a need of local industry for citizens to be employed. A large majority of the citizens travel out of the county for employment. Creation of niche businesses have come and been successful but more are needed to affect the population. There continues to be concern over disease prevalence and access to care for dental disease. The number of public health dentists has been significantly reduced along with availability of dental care provided by mobile clinics to the impoverished. Recreational program and facilities were a concern of Nottoway citizens.

Community Issues

As an ELC, we looked at the responses from the survey and discussed the trends in the data. Discussion of needs came from the data and interviews from officials addressing those issue. They listed those with a higher response rate and then once we agreed on the list, the issues were ranked based on identified need.

Future Programming to Address Community Issues

Many of these programming focuses are beyond our reach but through partnerships and the hiring of an ANR agent and an FCS Agent these can be addressed.

1. Drug abuse- Partnerships with the middle and high schools can help in this Community issue. Parent forums on what to look for in your child can help address this problem of vaping, and over the counter medication utilization. Health Rock is the curriculum of choice to address Priority 1.
2. Lack of jobs and economic development and employee resources is another issue facing the citizens of Nottoway County. Collaborating with the CTE program and developing internships for students not planning to go to college can help address some of the problem. Adult classes offered through the adult basic education program could assist graduated clientele enhancing computer skills and clerical work.
3. Marketing is the first step to get volunteers to start getting vetted and trained. Opportunities are many when the need for volunteers is addressed. Once Nottoway has more financial resources to train volunteers, we can start marketing to fill that void.
4. Nottoway County extension office has only one agent and a P14 for ANR, through partnerships of master gardeners and Nottoway County public school the need of self-sustainability can be addressed. Limiting factors are funding, and personnel. Addressing the county for funding to hire more staff will need to be part of this long-term sustainable plan.
5. Nottoway's citizens identified the need of money management skills be offered. In order to address this need for the short term a committee of financial institutions and educators could address this priority. In order for extension to meet this long term need there needs to be more staffing to address this programming need.

More priorities are listed and explanations on how to address these are in the chart at the beginning of this publication.

Visit Virginia Cooperative Extension: ext.vt.edu

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.